

Message Text

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USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

UNCLAS MUNICH 0711

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: STRAUSS ON SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN ELECTIONS

1) AT MUNICH PRESS CONFERENCE APRIL 14 DEVOTED MAINLY TO SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN ELECTIONS FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS INSISTED RESULTS DID NOT SIGNIFY CHANGE IN TREND, AND HE DENIED THERE WAS ANY ANTI-STOLTENBERG EFFECT INVOLVED. STOLTENBERG, HE SAID, TOLD HIM TWO DAYS BEFORE ELECTION THAT IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO MOBILIZE CDU VOTERS AND CONVINCE THEM OF IMPORTANCE OF THE ELECTION. THIS, STRAUSS THOUGHT, WAS CHIEF CAUSE OF CDU'S PERCENTAGE LOSS, NOT LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN CDU OR STOLTENBERG. TASK FOR UNION NOW, HE SAID, IS TO CONDUCT ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS IN WAY THAT DEMONSTRATES THE DIFFERENCES IN THE POLITICAL PARTIES MORE CLEARLY TO THE VOTERS. CDU, HE SAID, SHOULD TAKE THE OFFENSIVE IN NORTH RHINE WESTPHALIA.

2) STRAUSS MADE POINT OF PRAISING STOLTENBERG WHO, HE SAID, HAS EARNED WIDESPREAD RESPECT AS EXTREMELY ABLE LEADER IN THE

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FOUR YEARS SINCE HE TOOK OVER SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN GOVERNMENT AS

RELATIVE UNKNOWN. STRAUSS ANSWERED QUESTION ON STOLTENBERG'S POST-ELECTORAL STATUS IN CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE RACE BY SAYING MATTER HAD NOT COME UP AT THAT MORNING'S CSU BOARD MEETING AND ADDING HIS OPINION THAT PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE IN LANDTAG ELECTIONS SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE CRITERION IN CHOOSING CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE.

3) ASKED WHETHER HE HAD DRAWN ANY CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING HIS OWN PARTICIPATION IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN IN CONTEXT OF REACTION TO SONTHOFFEN SPEECH, STRAUSS RETORTED THAT IN SEVEN MEETINGS HE HAD ATTRACTED 25,000 LISTENERS, AND HE THOUGHT ATTENDANCE WAS RELIABLE INDICATOR FOR A POLITICIAN. HE ADDED THAT ATTENDANCE AT HIS MEETINGS IN LUEBECK AND RENDSBURG, WHERE SPD IS STRONG, WAS EVEN BETTER THAN IN HUSUM, WHICH IS CDU STRONGHOLD.

4) COMMENT: STRAUSS DEMONSTRATED HE SEES CLEAR PERSONAL INTEREST IN COUNTERING ANY TENDENCY TO WRITE STOLTENBERG OFF AS CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE. AS LONG AS STOLTENBERG REMAINS AS SERIOUS COMPETITOR TO KOHL, STRAUSS'S OWN CHANCES OF EMERGING AS WINNER, HOWEVER DIM THEY MIGHT NOW SEEM, AT LEAST REMAIN ALIVE. MOREOVER, EVEN IF STRAUSS CANNOT WIN THE PRIZE HIMSELF, HE CERTAINLY WANTS TO HAVE DECISIVE VOICE IN THE SELECTION SO THAT THE WINNING CANDIDATE IS BEHOLDEN TO HIM. HE WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE KOHL WALK OFF WITH NOMINATION BY DEFAULT. IN THIS CONNECTION, MUNICH CSU LEADER AND BAVARIAN INTERIOR MINISTRY STATE SECRETARY KIESL SAID AT MUNICH PRESS CLUB EVENING OF APRIL 14 THAT CSU STILL INSISTS STRAUSS IS CANDIDATE FOR CHANCELLORSHIP, ALONG WITH KOHL, STOLTENBERG AND CARSTENS. KIESL ADDED THAT HERETOFORE CDU HAS ALWAYS HAD PRIORITY IN SELECTION OF LEADERS, BUT HE SAW NO REASON WHY THIS SHOULD CONTINUE. SPIVACK

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